

MAN

Spirit, Soul & Body

“And Yahweh God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”

Genesis 2:7.

by Dr. Mark Spitsbergen, ThD, MS

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Address correspondence to:

Mark Spitsbergen

Abiding Place Ministires

1073 N Campo Truck Trail, Campo CA 91906

www.AbidingPlace.org

AwakeSD@me.com

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
The Literalness Of The Inner Man	7
The Earthly Tabernacle	10
Spirit And Soul - The Heart	12
The Distinction Between The Spirit And Soul	13
The Satanic Control - The Flesh	15

Introduction

“And Yahweh God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul”, Genesis 2:7.

Man’s body lay lifeless as an empty shell until the Father breathed His own Life and Spirit into Adam’s body. When the life of God filled Adam he became a living soul. A living soul is a triune being consisting of spirit, soul and body. Why does man have a spirit, soul and body? The only explanation is because God has a spirit, soul and body. Man was created in the image and likeness of God and therefore must draw all of the facts of his existence from God. There are hundreds of scriptures, which refer to the Spirit Soul and Body of God. The idea of Yahweh’s triune nature is very clearly elucidated throughout the Holy Scriptures.

The Bible refers to the body as the outward man (2 Cor. 4:16) and to the spirit and soul as the inner man (Eph. 3:16). The outward man is what we are primarily aware of because it is what we see. However, the inner man is the source of all that we say and do. As we will describe in more detail later, the heart of man is the inner man. The scripture teaches us, that as a man “thinks in his heart so is he” (Proverbs 23:7). The condition of the heart will therefore be reflected in man’s behavior. Jesus stresses this when he said. “for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks” (Matthew 12:34). An allegory that helps to clarify this is a musician and his musical instrument. The outward body is much like the musical instrument; the instrument cannot make a single note unless there is a musician to play it. This is consistent with the way the outward man functions in relationship to the inward man.

The outward man, as the instrument, only does that which the inner man dictates. This is why the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). All that a man is: emotions, desires, appetites and intellect come from the inner man.

When Adam rebelled against God, his heart became polluted with sin and the power of Satan took charge of life. In this state, mans heart became shrouded with the sins of the flesh. His heart became corrupt and the imaginations of his heart were continually evil (Genesis 6:4). In this condition what comes forth from the heart is “evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness” (Mark 7:21-22). This condition of the heart is called the flesh. The “flesh” is a term referring to the nature of sin in the heart of man.

The only way that God could bring man back into relation with Himself, was to provide a means whereby mans heart could be changed and made pure again. God did this through the work of redemption. By the purifying blood of Jesus God removed every unclean thing from the heart of man. By the circumcision of Christ the Holy Spirit cut away the corrupted foreskin of the heart of fallen man and “removed the body of the sins of the flesh” (Col. 2:11). Now with a pure heart man can know God and serve Him (Matt. 5:8; 1Cor 2:12; 1 Peter 2:14).

The spirituality of man is not a hidden mystery that is ungraspable by our thoughts. Our spirit and soul is the motivator of our every action. The hidden man of the heart is the focus of redemption and should also be our daily focus as well. We should keep our hearts with all diligence because from there come forth the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23). God has placed the seal of redemption upon the hearts of all who will believe by giving us the Holy Spirit. God wants us to be taught and trained by the Holy Spirit to walk in all of the ways of life, which Adam abandoned.

Both the inner man and the outer man have been made the

property of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. “Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid... therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor 6:15-20) We will see that the body still has the sentence of death in it because of Adam’s sin but it is not sinful and that the soul and spirit are once again renewed in the image of God.

The Literalness Of The Inner Man

We should not think of our soul and spirit as an intangible substance locked within our body. The inner man is as real and tangible as the outward man, with a mouth, eyes, ears, hands, feet, everything that the outward body has. This may seem unbelievable but let us consider some Bible facts. In Matthew chapter 17, Jesus took Peter, James and John into a high mountain where He was transfigured before them. “And behold there appeared unto them Moses and Elijah talking with Him” (Matthew 17:3; Luke 9:30-31). Moses had been dead for about 1700 years; his body was buried in a valley near Beth-peor, (Deut. 34:5-6). Yet, he appeared to Jesus and talked with Him and was seen by the disciples. The remains of his body were somewhere in Beth-peor yet, he appears just as Jesus and Elijah to the disciples. We can be certain that it was the soul and spirit of Moses that was seen. It would have been impossible for Moses to have a resurrected body for Jesus is the first to resurrect from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus would not take place for at least another year. No man received a resurrected body before Jesus for Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection, He is the first begotten of the dead (1 Cor. 15:20-23; Rev 1:5). The Moses that the disciples saw was his spiritual man or inner man. Because of this example, we know that the inner man has an appearance like the outward man. It has the ability to look, think, and function with or without the outward body.

It is scripturally sound to understand yourself as body soul and spirit from head to toe. The outward man is corruptible and will

have to pass away because of the death sentence, and await the resurrection. Our inner man is incorruptible and will never cease from consciousness; it will pass unchanged from this life to the next.

The body is the tabernacle for the soul and the spirit (2 Peter 1:13-15, 2 Cor. 5:1-9, 1Peter 3:3-4). In Job 4:19 a reference is made to the body as the dwelling place of the inner man. We read, "...how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay." All that a man is in the realm of his consciousness and identity dwells in a body much the same as one would dwell in their house. The natural body is the house in which an individual lives. Jesus referred to his body as a house when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19).

The most outstanding difference between the inner man and the outer man is that the inner man will never lie down and die. The only corruption that the inner man can experience is the corruption of sin otherwise it is incorruptible. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23-25 that when the redeemed person dies, he leaves his body and goes into the presence of the Lord. When we die, we depart from our bodies much like we depart from homes when going on vacation. It is clear that the body goes to the grave, to await a resurrection, but the soul and spirit continue conscious; weather in heaven or hell.

It is important to understand that the body without the spirit is dead (James 2:26). When the inner man departs, the body is left lifeless. The faculties of man are in the inner man, not in the body. We know, that when the inner man goes to be with the Lord, that all of the faculties of that individual are present. Dying and going to be with the Lord would be meaningless if what arrived was unconscious and intangible. Paul said that it is "far better" to be with the Lord than to be present in the body. His heart was yearning for a closer experience with God. Unless man has all of his faculties present he would be unable to appreciate what is happening around him. In the body Paul was able to feel the presence of God

and communicate with Him. Therefore, all of this would be enhanced in a “far better” state. This point is made to emphasize the fact that everything we think, do and know is not determined by the body but by the soul and spirit living within the body.

It is evident that in the inner man, not in the brain, is where the memory and personality reside. The brain was given for motor and reflex ability and is part of the outward man. All that a man knows and thinks, exist in the realms of his inner man, “...what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of a man which is in him?” This is further emphasized in Revelation 6, the martyred saints appear under the altar at the time of the fifth seal. Obviously this does not exclude their spirit for many times the Bible uses soul or spirit to identify the inner man and furthermore we know that when a person dies their spirit returns to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7; 3:21; Job 34:14). The souls under the altar are conscious; they remember who killed them and they were expressing their desire for God to avenge them. They were able to speak and to receive instruction, and also to be clothed with white garments. All these statements serve to emphasize that the inner man is both tangible and conscious.

The soul and the spirit are so closely related that it is difficult to distinguish between them. In Hebrews 4:12 we discover that the Word of God is able to divide the soul from the spirit and the joint from the marrow. The word of God does this to reveal the thoughts and the intents of the heart. The joints and the marrow and clinically inseparable, one cannot remain viable without the other, it follows then that the soul cannot remain viable without the spirit. Man’s soul and spirit exist within the realm of the heart, and it is in this realm that the thoughts and intentions exist as an interaction of the soul and spirit. Man’s doctrines should not divide the soul and the spirit especially in view of making the spirit joined unto God and the soul yet alien and out of conformity to God. In fact there are only two New Testament Scriptures that distinguish the soul from the spirit,, Hebrews 4:12 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Certainly, God’s Word can divide the soul from the

spirit but man cannot.

God describes Himself and the spiritual world in terms of physical characteristics. For us to say otherwise is to overstep the boundaries of the infallibility of God's Word. There is not one place in the entirety of the Bible where the spiritual world is not represented in a clear and tangible way. To attempt to second guess God and argue that it is so described in order that we may be able to understand is to both change God's Word and to limit Him. If the spirit world were a mist of intangible energy God would have communicated that to us. However, the spirit world is clearly revealed and understood by the things that are made (Romans 1:20).

The glorified body of the Lord Jesus revealed to us what both the nature and appearance of the spiritual body. His body was the first to be changed from the mortal to the immortal. After His resurrection He was able to pass through walls yet be handled by the hands of man. Although His spiritual body was perfect and incorruptible it still had the scars of being nailed to the tree and the wound of a spear. He sat down on the shore of Galilee and ate fish and honey with His disciples. His body had been raised up a spiritual body and yet was as tangible as the body that he had before he died.

The Earthly Tabernacle

Redemption is complete for the spirit, soul and body. There is only one event that must take place for us to receive all the fullness that salvation brings, the resurrection of the body. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands eternal in the heavens" 2 Corinthians 5:1. The first dimension of the resurrection that we experience is the resurrection of the inner man (Colossians 3:1). Our bodies are still waiting for the manifestation of the salvation that we have received which will be the resurrection of the corruptible body to incorruption (Romans 8:23). The result of the resurrection will be that we receive a spiritual body

like that one that Jesus has. And we know that we will appear with Him and be known just as we are known now.

Even though the body still has the death sentence in it because of Adam's sin yet it is made alive by the same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead, (Romans 8:11) The death sentence has not left the body subject to the devil for the body now belongs to the Lord. Rather, the death sentence has left the body still destined to return to dust. Our bodies are God's purchased possessions and we are to glorify God with our bodies, which are His (Ephesians 1:14; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20). We cannot be anymore redeemed than we are now. The body that we now have is holy and is the temple of God. He has made our bodies pure and undefiled and if we defile it through fornication God said He will destroy us in hell.

Everyman whether redeemed or not will receive an immortal body. However, those who refuse the salvation that is only in the name of Jesus Christ will be raised up to experience the second death and spend eternity in Hell (Revelation 20:4-15).

There are many who believe that the power of sin remains in the body and once divested of the body we will be delivered from sin. Yet there are many facts that are overlooked in order to derive at such a conclusion. We know that the angels that sinned all had immortal, spiritual bodies. But more importantly it was not the coming into the world of an earthly body that gave place to the power of sin but disobedience that allowed death and the reign of Satan in. Adam had a natural earthly body when he was created and he was sinless until he disobeyed and lost his fellowship with God. We cannot say that sin is in the mortal body neither can we say that sinlessness is in the immortal body. The body of sin was destroyed through the circumcision of Christ as soon as the believing child called on the name of Jesus and was delivered from the power of Satan.

Spirit And Soul - The Heart

The heart of man is the incorruptible inner man (1 Peter 3:4). The heart of man and the inner man are synonymous and describe the immortal and spiritual dimension of man. It is the condition of the heart that determines mans spiritual state. It is from the heart that either wickedness or righteousness will flow out. If man is to be made a new creature then it is his heart that must be made new, for it is from the heart that the dominion of sin has reigned. When God looks at man He does not make decisions about him based on the outward appearance rather, “God looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7). The Psalmist being made aware of the desire of God to interact with man on the basis of truth and sincerity said, “God desires truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part you shall make me know wisdom” (Psalms 51:6). It is only with the heart that man can draw near to God and interact with Him in truth. This is also emphasized in the Law where special emphasis is placed on the way that the kidneys, liver, diaphragm and the fat that surrounds them are offered as a burnt offering to the Lord. These parts, which are the representation of the inward parts of man are turned into smoke and made invisible to interact with the invisible God. The Hebrew word for inward parts is ‘qerev’ and shares the same Hebrew root with ‘qarav’, which means to draw near.

When Jesus looked at the Pharisees, he saw them in a way that they were unwilling to see themselves; He saw their heart. Although outwardly they had all the correct form and appeared as though they were righteous, when Jesus looked on their heart He saw that they were filled with wickedness. The Pharisees went to church every night, fasted twice a week, prayed long prayers, paid tithes, worshipped God and preformed every ritual required under the Law. They did all of these things yet their heart was not right. All the correct observances and rituals are no substitute for a pure heart. God testified to Israel many times that it was the condition of their heart that needed to change. He commanded them to circumcise their heart and to change their ways but they were un-

willing and unable. The condition of man's heart was such that the imaginations of his heart were continually wicked (Genesis 6:5, Jeremiah 17:9). The only hope for man was faith in the coming redeemer that was expressed through the blood of bulls and goats. The only remedy for the deceit of their heart was through obeying everything that God had spoken to them in His Word.

When God spoke of His desire to intimately fellowship with man He spoke of the change in mans heart that was needed. God promised Israel that He would so radically change their heart that he would put his law in their inward parts and write it in their hearts (Jeremiah 30:33; Hebrews 8:10; 2 Corinthians 3:3). God promised all of mankind that the condition of their heart would be changed so that they could know Him and walk with Him. He would bring about this change by changing them from within, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh and I will put my Spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:26-27). In order for God to bring deliverance to the sinful condition of mans heart it was necessary for Him to provide a means for mans heart to be circumcised, so that the body of the sins of the flesh could be cut away (Colossians 2:11; Romans 2:29).

The Distinction Between The Spirit And Soul

The difference between the soul and spirit are very subtle. The scripture indicates that in general the spirit is associated with the intellect and the soul with the emotions. These two aspects of man are for all practical purposes inseparable. In fact, the Word of God is the only means by which these two integrated aspects of man may be separated. Unfortunately, one of the devastating consequences of man attempting to make distinctions between the soul and the spirit is to make one joined to God and the other foreign to God. There are certain doctrines dating back to ancient times making the spirit of man the only dimension of man capable of knowing God while the soul is inferior and in fact an enemy of God. The modern counterpart is that the spirit is saved through

thee redemption that is in Christ Jesus while the soul is still in process. In fact many of made a grievous error by making the soul and the flesh nature synonymous. This fallacy is very similar to the most ancient heretical teachings of Alexandria.

Why would God be interested in only freeing man's spirit from the dominion of Satan while leaving his soul captive to sin? In the Levitical Law, atonement is directed at the soul; "for the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for the soul" (Leviticus 17:11). Is the spirit eliminated from this atonement because it is not mentioned? Absolutely not, for both the soul and the spirit were alienated from God. When God created Adam he made him a living soul. Although, the spirit is not mentioned at all in these passages we know that it is including as part of a "living soul".

We find the Hebrew equivalent for soul (nephesh) 757 times in the Old Testament and spirit (ruah) 389 times. In the New Testament we find the Greek equivalent (psueke) 105 times and spirit (pneuma) 385 times. Yet only two verses of scripture clearly differentiate them while at the same time placing both on an equal level of importance, 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrew 4:12. To add to the complexity of discerning the difference between the soul and the spirit the English translations of the Bible at times render the Hebrew or Greek word for soul spirit and vice versa. Even when we sort through the translation differences it is difficult to make absolute differences between the soul and the spirit. For the most part we can only find generalizations that do not always hold exclusively for one or the other. In general we observe the spirit as the dimension of man that remembers and thinks those attributes most commonly associated with the mind. The soul is generally associated with emotion and that realm of deep feeling and need. Job said that the "flesh upon him shall have pain, and the soul within him shall mourn" (Job 14:22). The physical body has nerve endings and when these are mishandled we feel the pain of injury. Similarly, the soul when touched with the knowledge of something bad feels sorrow and mourns. The spirit is also

accredited with the strength and vitality of a person. The spirit is understood as the vital attribute of life that causes every creature on the earth to breath (Genesis 7:22; Psalms 104:29). It is associated with the unseen force and strength that moves things and thus is associated with the wind. The spirit is the place of courage and anger (Proverbs 14:29). Finally, the spirit is the candle of the Lord that searches all the inward parts of the belly, (Proverbs 20:27) The soul represents the whole of the individual, the very essence of his being, and as such men are referred to as souls rather than spirits (Exodus 16:16 note- one must read in Hebrew to discern this in that the English translations render 'nephesh' as persons, life, creature, etc.).

God describes men as a triune being, with a spirit, soul and body. It is the spirit, soul and body that came under the dominion of sin and death and it is the spirit, soul and body that have been delivered (1 Thessalonians 5:23). When men's doctrines begin to define a soulish nature in contrast to a spirit nature then they have derived this not from the Bible but from ancient heretical sources such as the Gnosticizing work called "The Exegesis On The Soul".

The Satanic Control - The Flesh

One of the terms used describe man under the control of Satan is the "flesh". One of the pitfalls that we must be careful not to fall into is confusing this same terminology used to describe both the natural body and human ability. When flesh is used in context to the dominion of Satan and his works of unrighteousness in the life of man then it is synonymous with the sin nature. The flesh nature is man soul and spirit being subjugated to the power of sin and death. All sin is the work of Satan (1 John 3:8), and everyone who commits sin is of the devil. The works of the sin nature or the flesh are named, "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness (Galatians 5:22-23). These wicked works are corollary to those described as proceeding forth from a wicked heart in Mark 7:21-22. This is further proof that the flesh nature and the unredeemed heart (soul and spirit)

are the same. These works are in opposition to the nature and ways of God. They are contrary to the Spirit of God and God will never come into union with them or those who do them. Before Adam rebelled against God he lived in the works and nature of the Holy Spirit; love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. However, after his rebellion and subsequent loss of the Holy Spirit his nature became corrupted by the nature of Satan.

Satan's dominion over the world system is a result of his dominion over the heart of man; man's passions, emotions and intellect all being subject to the Satanic rule. In Ephesians 2:2-3, Paul describes the bondage to Satan before redemption, "Wherein in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince and power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others". Satan began to chart this course for man the moment that he was allowed to enter into Adam's life. He became the god of this world and everything in the world system is under his control. Satan's world, consist of "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life", (1 John 2:16). These things are Satan's primary weapons against man to both destroy his soul and the image of God that is in him. When these things are in the heart of man there is not room for the love of the Father. Jesus pointed out the dominion of Satan in the heart of the religious leaders of His day when he said, "You are from beneath; I am from above: you are of this world; I am not of this world" (1 John 8:23). When a person is of this world he is enslaved to the demonic currents that course through every dimension of his life.

Satan as an evil taskmaster, rules this world with his diabolical allies. Throughout the scriptures, the authority of Satan and those angels that follow him are revealed. His allies are referred to as principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and

spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12). Man, in the corruption of his nature, is unable to resist these powers. Every unredeemed man is under their authority and enslaved to their desires and deceptions. Paul describes this subjugation in Romans chapter 7. Even when a man is devoutly religious and determined to walk with God he finds himself caught in the current of the world. The only way that a man can really serve God and walk in his ways is by being set free from this bondage and liberated from the course of the world. Until this freedom comes then all are as Paul described himself to be before he met Jesus, “For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death”. As long as mankind is in bondage to sin, the ways of God are out of his reach, for his members; spirit, soul and body are the servants of sin.

God made know His ways when He declared His Law at Mount Sinai. In doing this, He revealed to all humanity how different they were from Him. Paul recognized this and placing himself in the position of one who only had the Law has a means of justification, declares, “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin” (Romans 7:14). Here, the total inability of man to bring forth the fruits of righteousness is described for man in his own ability only brings forth the fruits of death. All of mankind became the spiritual offspring of Satan through Adam’s sin, their only hope was to be born a new, born from above. Paul’s slavery as an unredeemed person cannot be more illustrated than when he said, “Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me” (Romans 7:17). Once again, though a man under the Law desired to walk in the beauty of God’s ways, he found a greater power than his own will ruling over his desires, “But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Romans 7:23). As long as a man is in the “flesh”, he is subject to the rulers of the darkness because their dominion resides within his heart. And so then, “they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:8).

The Holy Spirit clearly draws the line by the Apostle John between the children of disobedience and the children of God, “In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever does not do righteousness is not of God, neither he that does not love his brother”. The Lord Jesus will one day judge every man according to his works. The types of works that occur in a person’s life are the evidence of whom they are the servants of, “Whosoever commits sin is the servant of sin” (John 8:34).

All disobedience to God is alliance with the powers of darkness. If a person walks in disobedience, it is an evident token that he is in bondage to sin. In Colossians 3:5, we have an abbreviated list of the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21. These are the works of the children of disobedience. In 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 a similar list identifies the unrighteous. Similarly, a list is given in Romans 1:28-32, Ephesians 5:3-6 and Revelation 21:8. In every case those who do these things have no part in God or in His Kingdom and the wrath of God abides on them. The carnal fleshly mind is enmity against God it is not subject to the law of God, “neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). The carnal mind is the one that is under the control and influence of the god of this world. The carnal mind is under the influence of sin and the wages of sin is death, therefore “to be carnally minded is death” (Romans 8:6). The power of sin has so alienated mankind from God that the natural carnal mind cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God, “for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The Greek word translated as ‘natural mind’ is ‘psuchikos’ which refers to the depraved nature of the unredeemed. Psuchikos, in this context refers to that which sensual and devilish. This state of the spirit and soul exemplify the spiritual separation that took place between God and man when Adam sinned. In this state of darkness and deception mankind craves the lust of the flesh and the sensual pleasures stimulated by the senses of the natural body.

The Gnostics attempted to persuade people that scripture such as Romans 8:8 supported their doctrine that the body was where sin

resides. They believed that as long as a person was mortal they would be enslaved to sin. Therefore they claimed that only the spirit of man could be truly saved. They taught that the soul and body were created by evil powers of darkness in an attempt to separate man from God. As a result they were unwilling to accept that God was manifested in the flesh. Jesus was manifested in the flesh or a physical body but He definitely did not have a sin nature. In fact, His body was Holy and was indeed the Temple of God even as all those who have been redeemed and set free from the sin nature by Him.

The plight of unredeemed men is that they are the “children of wrath”. Condemnation or the death sentence is upon all men because of Adam’s sin. As a devoutly religious man, Paul emphasized the condemnation that resulted from knowing the Law of God and not obeying it. The Law was unable to rid man of the sin nature and impart the life of God and the power to overcome sin (Galatians 3:21). The Law brought condemnation because it showed man his sinfulness and yet offered no remedy to cure the heart of sin.